

With The M.O.H.'s Compliments



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE
Urban District of Soothill Upper,
FOR
1896.



DEWSBURY:

DAWSON & SON, PRINTERS, MARKET PLACE



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*To the Sanitary Committee of the Soothill Upper
Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my SECOND ANNUAL REPORT on the health of your District. I think I will be able to show you that it marks progress all along the line.

The area is 1,897 acres, represented by the figures of the present year, and the population according to the census of 1891, 5,848, but reckoned on the difference between the deaths and births, the present population is estimated to be 6,170, and on this number all my calculations will be based.

The births for the year amounted to 199, 102 males and 97 females, giving a birth rate of 32·2 per thousand, against 30·7 for 1895.

The deaths for the year amounted to 113, 67 males and 46 females, giving a death rate of 18·3 per thousand, against 20·5 for 1895.

AGES AT DEATH.

Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	25
1 year and under 5 years	...	...	...	...	...	26
5 years	„	15	„	...	...	1
15	„	„	25	„	...	6
25	„	„	65	„	...	36
65 years and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	19
						<hr/> 113

You will see from the table that 25 died within the first year of their existence, which is equal to 125 per thousand of the children born, against 173 for 1895. An unusual number, 26, died in the second period, and of those 19, 65 years and upwards, 8 ranged from 71 to 82 years, giving the top limit in this district.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	1	} Zymotic Diseases.
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	1	
Measles...	...	...	...	...	13	
Hooping Cough	...	...	...	...	1	
Diarrhœa or Dysentery	...	...	...	...	1	
Phthisis	10	
Respiratory Organs	23	
Heart Disease	8	
Injuries...	8	
All other causes	47	
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The zymotic death rate claims our first attention, and is equal to 2·7 per thousand, against 2·6 for 1895. Of this 2·7, measles was responsible for 2·1, which swelled the number between the ages of 1 year and 5, so that only a fraction, 0·6, is left for the other zymotic diseases. Phthisis death rate 1·6, respiratory diseases 3·7.

In the month of January I reported to you that a wave of measles had been passing over the country, and that it had now reached our district. That wave extended from south to north, and passed over our district in the same direction during the months of January, February, March and April. Commencing

mild at first, the type became so severe that it was deemed advisable to close Mill Lane Infants, Gregory Street and Shaw Cross Board Schools for several weeks. The greatest mortality from measles was registered from Common Side and about Mill Lane Board School. You will see from the mortality this is not the trifling complaint that it is popularly supposed, and being so dangerously an infective disease, if we are to do anything to stem the current of an epidemic it must be a notifiable disease, so that we may be able to reach the commencing cases. The other zymotic diseases 0·6 plainly show that the drainage is already bearing fruit.

Enteric fever and those complaints allied to it are sometimes called the “filth diseases,” to what then is the large infantile mortality due? Early and indiscriminate marriages may have something to do with it, but I cannot help thinking that it is largely associated directly or indirectly with poverty. While we dwell in a land of strikes, and where the wives have to eke out the scanty earnings of their husbands, I fear the per centage will always be large.

One death was due to rupture of a varicose vein of the leg, and had “First Aid” been at hand this life might have been saved. Such a contingency is now being provided against.

I have made numerous visits individually on sanitary matters during the year, but on the 7th May, along with the Sanitary Inspector, I visited the shoddy manure heap near the Railway Bridge at Soothill Lane; also the refuse at the top of France Street, consisting of soot cake, hair waste and flock dust. As these heaps were well removed from any dwellings, I did not consider them dangerous to health. I also visited with Mr. Fenn on the 5th November as to the typhoid cases in previous months. Found a large ashpit in connexion with houses in Station Road, although covered in, yet it contained a great deal of fluid. This is common in different parts of the district. I advised raising and concreting the floors; also that notices should be posted on the

ashpit doors, prohibiting fluid being thrown on the ashes. This latter has been loyally carried out by the householders.

In order to give you some idea of the comparative health of the District, I have tabulated the infectious cases reported according to the locality, and from this table I infer that the reported cases in the direction of or surrounding Mill Lane predominate.

STREETS OR LOCALITY.	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever.	Enteric or Typhoid	Continued Fever.	Puerperal.	Erysipelas.	TOTAL.
Quarry Street	1						1
Station Road	1		1				2
G. N. Railway Cottages ...	2						2
Bromley Street... ..		3	1			1	5
Oaks Road		1					1
Brewery Road		1					1
Nursery Road		2					2
Owl Lane		1					1
Lady Anne Road		3	1				4
High Street		1	1		1		3
Chidswell		1					1
School Lane		2	1				3
Whiteley Buildings, Leeds-rd.		2					2
Common Side		1					1
West Street			1			1	2
Spurr Street			1				1
Colbeck Buildings				1			1
Greenwood Buildings... ..						1	1
Grace Leather Lane						1	1
Back Bromley Street						1	1
Sunderland Buildings... ..						1	1
New Street						1	1
Colliery Row, Leeds Road ...						1	1
TOTAL ...	4	18	7	1	1	8	39

The supply of water has been good and continuous and no case of lead poisoning has come under my notice, nor been reported to me.

In the month of November last, I pointed out to the rate-payers of Dewsbury the desirability of planting trees in different parts of the Borough. I cannot help recommending the same for your consideration. We are hundreds of years behind in this respect. Nothing seems to me so unfinished as roads bordered with dry stone walls, or houses, however good the building, without trees. I should like to see public bodies planting along the road sides, property owners with plantations round their dwellings, and land owners planting clumps of trees on their waste ground.


I hope now you will consider I have proved my case; that while the birth rate marks progress and prosperity, the death rate shows improved sanitation; and when the report by the West Riding County Council is published, I have no doubt we will stand well with the other Urban Districts.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT BEATTIE, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.



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